



THE MASONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

PAPER No. 118

PREPARED BY: Mrs J. St. Clair

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**Very Wor. Bro. Rev'd FREDERICK JAMES WILLIAM RICE  
(1919 - 1992)**

Frederick James William Rice was born at Vaucluse on 4 May 1919 to Frederick John and Sadie<sup>1</sup>Rice (nee O'Toole). He grew up in Arncliffe, attending Belmore Primary School and then Cleveland Street Boys' High School.

He spent two years studying Pharmacy and was apprenticed to Dash's Pharmacy at Canterbury.

In 1940, Frederick Rice felt called to Holy Orders and, at the age of 20, he was accepted into Moore Theological College in the Diocese of Sydney. He was Priested in St Andrew's Cathedral on St Thomas' Day in 1943.

On 5 February 1944 he married Esme Speers at St Clement's Church, Marrickville.

His first position was as Chaplain to the Mission to Seamen. This was followed by a locum at Port Kembla while the Rector was serving in the army. He was responsible for the running of eight churches in the parish and was virtually "run off his feet."

His first child, Jennifer, was born in September 1945. The day before her birth had been extremely busy with weddings, funerals and pastoral work. It was after midnight when he needed to take his wife to hospital. He had to negotiate bad roads and a rickety bridge, only to demolish the Matron's roses as he arrived in the hospital grounds. There was a lot of explaining to do!

After Port Kembla he completed a locum at St. Stephen's, Willoughby, and then became Minister-in-Charge of St. Thomas' Kingsgrove when a second daughter, Allison was born.

Rev'd Rice was much in demand as a "trouble-shooter" and was appointed to St. Alban's, Corrimal and St. Luke's, Clovelly to mediate and sort out various problems.

He spent ten happy years as Rector of St. Thomas', Enfield.

In 1976 he was appointed Chief Executive Officer of the William Thompson Masonic School and Hostel, a position he held with distinction until his retirement in 1984.

He also served as a major in the Citizen Military Forces.

After retirement he and his wife, Esme, bought a house at Epping where he was soon in demand for locum work.

This included terms at St Alban's, Epping and St. Martin's, Killara.

Sadly, he became ill with cancer and he and his wife moved to Caberra to be with their daughter Allison, in a 'granny flat'. They had only been there for two weeks when he died on 4 May 1992, his 73rd birthday.

Among the hobbies of Very Wor. Bro. Rev'd Fred Rice, were 'A' grade tennis, reading, and watching sport. He was slightly stocky in build with thick curly hair. He was a 'middle' Anglican churchman, a skilled mediator with a quiet unassuming manner and a much loved 'people's person.'

An obituary was recorded at the Grand Lodge Communication held on 13 May 1992 as follows:-

V.W. Bro. Rev. Frederick James Rice, Past Grand Chaplain, was initiated in Lodge Victoria No. 113, on 17 August 1943, where he became Worshipful Master in 1979.

In 1976 Wor. Bro. Rev. Fred Rice was appointed as the Executive Officer of the William Thompson Masonic School and Hostel, a position which he served with distinction until 1984. The rank of P.D.G.D.C. was conferred in 1984 and that of Past Grand Chaplain in 1988.

V.W. Bro. Fred Rice will be remembered for his quiet unassuming manner and his cheerfulness through an illness which became increasingly severe in the last twelve months. He recently moved with his wife, Esme, to Canberra in order to be nearer to his family and it is sad that he lived only a few weeks following that move.

All members of Grand Lodge will appreciate and draw inspiration from the example of dedication and fortitude displayed by this Brother.

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The Masonic career of Very Wor. Bro. Rev'd Frederick James William Rice.

Initiated in Lodge Victoria No. 113 on 17 August 1943.  
Called off on 15 May 1951.  
Grand Lodge Certificate No.154454

Affiliated with Lodge Gilwell No. 880 on 24 September 1964.  
(This Lodge consolidated with Lodge North Ryde No. 898 in 1985 to become Lodge Gilwell North Ryde No. 898).

He had affiliated with Lodge North Ryde No. 898 on 21 December 1976 but called off on 19 July 1977.

Rejoined Lodge Victoria No. 113 on 19 July 1977.  
Installed as Worshipful Master on 16 October 1979. Remained a member until his death on 4 May 1992.

Foundation member of Northern Line Daylight Lodge No. 1003 on 25 November 1989. Called off on 10 March 1992.

Chief Executive Officer of William Thompson Masonic School and Hostel from 1976 to 1984.

Grand Lodge.

Conferred: Past Deputy Grand Director of Ceremonies on 13 June 1984.  
Past Grand Chaplain on 14 September 1988.

40 Year Membership Certificate No. 828 issued on 23 December 1987.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

V.Wor. Bro. Rev'd. Frederick James William Rice.

United Grand Lodge of NSW and ACT.	Library and membership records.
<i>The New South Wales Freemason.</i>	Page 193, Obituary, 13 May 1992.
Rice, Mrs Esme.	Personal papers.

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